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*Inside a spy's nervous system*

GREAT TRUE SPY STORIES. Edited by Allen Dulles,  
Harper & Row. 393 pp. \$6.95.

By Michael Burke

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At the heart of the matter is always a solitary agent, afraid. What put him there, what propels him past his fear to do what he must do is the source of fascination in the craft of intelligence — to borrow the title from Allen Dulles' earlier book.

From his singular vantage point, as former director of the Central Intelligence Agency, Mr. Dulles has now put together a compelling collection of factual accounts of the flesh-and-blood profession of spying, ranging across various technical categories of secret intelligence from antiquity to the present. Accomplishment, coupled with "greatness as a human being," was his touchstone.

Dramatic and even bizarre as these adventures are, stories of clandestine intelligence must be read on two levels: what happens overtly and, at the same time, what happens inside the agent's nervous system. One can readily visualize what occurred physically in a given circumstance. To wit, "Although the West German police were checking documents of passengers on the train, the car in which they sat was not checked." This one sentence, in "Assassin Disarmed by Love," deals with the escape to West Berlin of a Soviet agent and his wife. On the first level nothing happened. Their car wasn't checked. But, on the second level, what was happening inside the Stahinskiys as they feigned tired indifference — though they knew a document check would mean a return to the East and death?

A normal citizen living his single life can mail a letter, board a bus, cash a check, drive to the sea, drink at his bar, perform a myriad of simple acts without reflection. A spy, on the other hand, lives with knowledge that a Sunday stroll in the park may be disastrous. He cannot set aside his profession, disengage his overt from his covert self, even on the weekend. He must put down deep and tough tree roots if he is to have staying power. Even in this technically sophisticated spy-ship age, Mr. Dulles says, "One irreplaceable element remains essential — the skill of the human being himself."

The perceptive stories by Rebecca West and Alan Moorehead, in particular, probe beneath the physical circumstances into the mind and conscience of their central figures. Political assassination — not way-out James Bond but real-life Munich in 1959 — is the most chilling reading in a book designed to give a comprehensive view of the business of clandestine intelligence.

The most extraordinary chapter in the history of espionage is dealt with in "The Rise and Fall of a Soviet Agent." The story of Kim Philby is staggering. British

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subject, one-time First Secretary of the British Embassy in Washington, absolutely top-drawer member of British Intelligence from World War II onwards, he was throughout his distinguished surface career a secret Soviet agent. Except for a happenstance, Philby probably would have gone on to become head of Britain's Secret Intelligence Service. (Imagine Richard Helms, Director of Central Intelligence, as a secret Soviet agent, and you have the dimension.) Ultimately suspect and sacked from his high intelligence post in England, Philby moved to Beirut as correspondent for two English journals. So disarmingly did he continue his espionage activities on behalf of Russia, that one thoroughly duped Western official remarked at the time, "If he is a Soviet agent, let's have more like him." Nevertheless, a Lebanese security surveillance laid on at the behest of the British "produced extraordinary results." Philby was turning up at inexplicable addresses for secret meetings.

But even for the incredible Philby, the psychic battering apparently became unbearable. Suddenly, without warning, without toothbrush, he decamped to Moscow in 1963. As a close acquaintance, if not a good friend of Philby's, I found this account a tantalizing preface to a monumental story of espionage that remains to be told in full — probably by Philby.

Mr. Dulles' motive in editing this anthology was to throw more light on the real role of intelligence in the national life. He has succeeded with uncommon skill.

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